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BRIEF MENTION

Fifty Years of American Education. A Sketch of the Progress of Education in the United States from 1867 to 1917. By Ernest Carroll Moore (Ginn & Co.). "In the year 1867 Edwin Ginn took desk-room in a modest Boston office and so began the business which has for many years been conducted under the firm-name of Ginn and Company." . . . "Casting about for a suitable anniversary memento of our own fifty years, . . . it finally seemed to us that we could do no better than invite Dr. Ernest C. Moore to sum up the educational progress of the United States since 1867." This citation from the publishers' prefatory note answers the question that would otherwise be evoked by the specific date 1867 in the subtitle. And the memorial purpose of the publication sufficiently justifies a 'Sketch' in preference to a complete 'History.' Fortunately this 'Sketch' has been prepared by one of the scholars best fitted to write a complete history of the subject; and a coincidence of events has enabled Dr. Moore to adopt a time-division in his discussion that is at once inevitable as true history and suitable to a commemoration of the business career of Mr. Ginn. The division of the educational history of this country into the period before and the period after the Civil War is more significant by far than any other possible division that might be suggested; and Dr. Moore's book of ninety-six pages consists chiefly of a chapter entitled "Education at the End of the Civil War," and another on "Some Changes since the Civil War." There is also an introductory chapter too tritely entitled "We Live in a Period of Change," in which the reader is reminded of the various departments of progress that have warranted the accepted judgment that, in the words of Mr. Eliot, the last fifty years have constituted "the most prodigious period of change through which the world has ever passed." An occasion is thus gained for emphasis on what is usually true in educational progress. Here changes tend to be slow of foot; educational methods may lag so far behind general progress as to be reprehensibly 'out of date.' This is one of the plain truths that are usually accepted in too complacent a manner. But there are periods in which there is a closer relation between educational progress and the energy of the world in general. The school must in a democracy, says Dr. Moore, "in a measure, overcome its tendency to aloofness and make itself the responsive servant of the public need. This it has done and is doing, and, in consequence, the changes which have taken place in education in the last fifty years are momentous."

An outline of our history of popular education since the Civil War requires the background of the preceding half-century. The two principal chapters of this Sketch, therefore, divide it into almost equal parts. As to the thoughtful interest inherent in these parts, it will be found to be a coherent unit, altho the first chapter, which is so largely a record of the birth of new ideas valiantly advocated and of the laying of lasting foundations, has a preponderance of points that cannot be matched in forward-pointing and incalculable significance. These points are, of course, known to students of 'Education,' but this 'Sketch,' may increase the number of reflective readers of this aspect of our history. To show that elements of permanence may be detected in a complex of changes, a statement may be quoted from the description of what was to be accomplished by the American Institute of Instruction, founded in 1829: "It will tend to raise the standard of the qualification of instructors, so that the business of teaching shall not be the last resort of dullness and indolence; but shall be considered, as it was in the days of republican Greece, an occupation worthy of the highest talents and ambition" (p. 15).

A few of the points jutting from the surface of this rapid survey may be pointed out. According to the census of 1860 there were more than twelve hundred thousand white citizens over twenty-one years of age who could not read or write; still worse, it was conjectured by some "that one-fourth of the population" was illiterate (p. 25). "The schools of New York were not free to all the children of the state until 1867" (p. 34). The Department of Education was established by Congress in 1867 (p. 24); in the same year W. T. Harris became superintendent of the schools of St. Louis, to begin an 'educational' career of national importance (p. 65). Henry Barnard, who afterwards became the first Commissioner of Education, founded the Teachers' Institute by a meeting in Hartford, Conn., in 1839 (p. 68). "Alternative courses and a large freedom of election began to be offered in colleges about the year 1869" (p. 74). Dr. Moore has handled his story in a manner that will hold the attention of the reader to the end, and he has done this under severe restraints of space. His compressed paragraphs and statistical details are carried along on a well-sustained current of earnest thought, which may win readers for whom the subject of educational history has had little attraction.

In his closing pages, Dr. Moore becomes a bit professional in a sense that has tended to repel thoughtful students from his special subject. He changes his style perceptibly and drifts into the jargon that has been so generally disapproved. "Physiology and psychology taught the schoolmaster that the human organism is an action system" (p. 92) illustrates a method of using the language that does not become an authoritative scholar, and yet he apparently requires "a liturgical familiarity" with it, for it reappears very

recently under his hand in this form: "The nervous system is an action system rather than a device for the production of knowledge" (*School and Society*, Feb. 16, 1918, p. 183). In the article just now referred to, Dr. Moore is concerned with the question of the transference of skill or training "from one context to another." The purist (to call himself by a perverted name), if he could be assured of a hearing, might express the wish to be more completely convinced that the effects of sound training in the elements of English grammar—especially in the principles of compounding words—have been transferred into the 'context' of some of the so-called new sciences.

J. W. B.

That the strenuous days through which Italy is passing are not devoid of scholarly productiveness is shown by the appearance of a revision of Scherillo's edition of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* (Milan, Hoepli, 1918). In 1896 the same publisher issued the *Canzoniere* with notes by G. Rigutini, the arrangement of the poems and the text following the *volgata* of Marsand. In 1908 appeared what was really a new book rather than a revised edition; the text and arrangement were based on the autograph manuscript (Cod. Vat. 3195); a preface of some seventy pages by M. Scherillo and a bibliography of selected titles were substituted for the former introductory matter. Rigutini's notes were in part preserved, with numerous corrections and additions by Scherillo, which were enclosed in brackets. After an interval of ten years this edition reappears, reset throughout and carefully revised. The brackets are now omitted, so that the notes are fused together without distinction of authorship. A much-needed practical improvement is the inclusion of line-numbers at the end of every stanza in the longer poems, and the indication at the top of every page of the numbers of the poems. The lines of the sonnets are still unnumbered, and this is no obstacle to quick reference; but the absence of line-numbers in the *canzoni* was an extreme inconvenience in the earlier editions. The bibliography is brought down to date, and to the preface is added an appendix, containing two important articles by Scherillo which had appeared separately elsewhere: (1) *Ancora degli endecasillabi di dodici sillabe*; (2) *Il fiume "Era" in Dante e nel Petrarca*. It will be remembered that in the sonnet *Non Tesin, Po, Varo* (no. 148) Petrarch mentions more than a score of rivers, all easily identified except *Era*. Rigutini had pointed out that this could not be the insignificant *Era* of Tuscany; he suggested that it might be the almost equally insignificant *Serchio*. In 1908 Scherillo added to this note a statement that the river in question was probably the *Saône* (Arar). In the new appendix,

however, he shows that Petrarch here, and Dante in *Paradiso*, vi, 59, almost certainly meant the Loire when they said Era; and in the notes to the sonnet Scherillo has substituted for the former note simply this: "*Era. La Loira.*" The minute care which this experienced scholar and editor has used in his revision makes this third edition one to be heartily commended.

K. MCK.

There is always "a new book on the short story," for this type of fiction is constantly inspiring critics and others to produce popular analyses of its form and technique. Among the more interesting of these recent critiques may be included Mr. Harry T. Baker's work, *The Contemporary Short Story* (Boston, D. C. Heath & Co.). This book, which aims to be "a practical manual," no doubt makes its strongest appeal to young college men and others who are still in the embryonic stage of authorship and have a keen desire to read all the latest shop-talk. In his chapter on "Originality," Mr. Baker maintains that "in the best short stories of the day there is not only essential originality but also something more than brainless entertainment. There is a solid kernel of thought, often a big idea, back of the narrative." His illustration, however, a story entitled "Sunrise," appears unsatisfactory: a beautiful girl in China who has always lived underground is brought forth one morning to behold the sunrise for the first time in her life; the shock is so great that she dies immediately, believing that she has gazed into the very face of God. The matter-of-fact modern reader may find it difficult, even for the purposes of art, to conceive of the beauty of this young woman, who has grown up in subterranean darkness.

Mr. Baker, however, discusses with fairly sound judgment Common Faults, Structure, Character *vs.* Plot, and How Magazines Differ. To each of the chapters is appended a list of suggestive questions for investigation by the diligent reader. We are glad to learn that the leading authors of the day have selected Stevenson's *A Lodging for the Night* and Bret Harte's *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* as the two best stories in English, and that Conan Doyle, in particular, favored Stevenson's *Pavilion on the Links*. This would seem to indicate that the greatest work in the short story has been accomplished, and that the modern attempts are feeble except as means of earning handsome incomes. Mr. Baker occupied for some time the position of manuscript reader for various prominent magazines, and speaks authoritatively; his experience with the Hearst publications has led him to make several pointed remarks concerning *The Cosmopolitan* and the school of "snappy" fiction writers.

T. M. C.

John Keats. By Sidney Colvin (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917). Some thirty years ago Mr. Sidney Colvin wrote the excellent *Life* of Keats in the English Men of Letters series, and now on the anniversary of the publication of the first volume of the poems (1817) Sir Sidney has produced a monumental work which is likely to be the standard *Life* of the poet for years to come. Here we have faithfully and vividly portrayed the "Junkets" of the early days, the Keats of "flint and iron," who was at the same time subject to "fits of depression and self-torment," when the reviews were mercilessly and ignorantly pounding him, and the broken man of the last months when the "tremendous adventure of his love" and his fatal disease had plunged him into an agony only relieved by death. The critical chapters of the volume are in accord with the best traditions of English scholarship. Thus, in the matter of sources Sir Sidney prefers to point out striking parallels from Elizabethan and contemporary writers, significant suggestions from works of art, and other indications of influence, all which show that Keats could make his own what he got from others. Colvin does not care to load the text with specialized discussion of originals nor append to it a learned mass of footnotes. Two and a half pages suffice for the treatment of the sources of the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and a single footnote gives only such necessary details as are too specialized for the text. It is also in accord with certain lapses of English scholarship that in this connection the reference to Dr. Noble MacCracken's article should be the "*Philological Journal* of the Chicago University, Vol. 1908," instead of *Modern Philology*, Vol. v, 1907. One is grateful for the frequent quotations from the Brown, Woodhouse, and other mss. which are almost as inaccessible to the scholar as to the layman. Thus the version of the "Bright Star" sonnet from Brown's transcript antedates the usual version written in Severn's copy of Shakespeare's *Poems* by nineteen months, and thereby forces the latter out of its pride of place as the last poem composed by Keats. The Woodhouse mss. throw interesting light on the poet's gay treatment of the prudish Woodhouse when the latter objected to the changes brought into the marvellous 36th stanza of the *Eve*. The outlining of the development of Keats's genius in the criticism of his separate poems is admirable. The discussion of such questions of technique as that of the heroic couplet from Chaucer onward brings out fully the revolutionary character of Keats's manipulation of his metrical instrument. On page 365 Louisville has wandered into Ohio, but on page 531 it has returned to its proper State. The work of the publishers in the printing and the illustrations is a credit to their house, even though they do print 'Knight-at-arms' as 'night-at-arms' (p. 469).

J. W. T.